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in the party who carried only ordinary ones. The painted spears were symbols of wealth and status and roughly corresponded to white tie and tails in our culture. No important man could afford not to have them, even though for most of the year they were unused. Before leaving home on a journey, it was often necessary for a man to renew the paint on his spears, for it rubbed off easily. Since paint was an aspect of ritual, its use, even the renewal of old paint, was senior men's prerogative; women were not supposed to touch it.⁶ The analogy with formal dress even extended to the borrowing of ceremonial spears. An important man, caught short of them, might borrow some from a contemporary who had plenty, and though everybody would know that his spears were borrowed, he at least was properly dressed for the occasion, though stark naked otherwise.

Baskets made of bark with gummed sides were made by the women, but the painted designs upon these baskets were applied by the men, in line with their monopoly on all work that required paint. These baskets of various sizes but little variation in shape were used for all domestic tasks involving the collection, storing, transporting, and preparing of vegetable foods, and were sufficiently watertight to enable water also to be carried in them. Ordinary wooden spears (without barbs or painted designs) and a great variety of throwing sticks were made by all men, young or old, but important old men bothered with them very little, considering such routine manufacture beneath them. These workaday spears and throwing sticks lay around every camp in abundance, and a man who needed spears or sticks in a hurry could always gather up a bundle in a few minutes. Small boys picked up the techniques of making spears and throwing sticks by spending time with older boys who in turn improved their skill both in making and using hunting weapons by spending time with the local young men.

Although much of this learning was fairly random, other instruction was not. During his initiation period a youth spent long intervals isolated in the bush with a couple of older teachers from whom he received training in religious and ritual matters. At the same time, of course, it was inevitable that the novice absorb some of the older men's experience in bushcraft. There was no corresponding initiation period for girls. What they learned, they learned first from the older women of their childhood household and later from the older women of the husband's household into which they moved as child-brides after puberty. In all households the supervision by the elderly women of all younger women included the training of both female children and young wives in the things all females should know—things which were mostly concerned with collecting and preparing vegetable foods and the making of baskets.

In pre-white times Tiwi males wore no clothing whatever. The Mission insisted on calico loincloths, but, at least in the 1928-29 period, one could

⁶ Female mourners were required to dash their bodies with white clay as a sign of mourning, but this paint was smeared haphazardly over their bodies and faces without any attempt at regularity or design, in contrast to the careful paint designs on the men's bodies.

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533 *Wurarrbuti* described, in song and dance, how some aborigines from the northern end of the island had tried to kill his father, but the father, being forewarned, had run into the mangrove swamp for shelter. A spear, however, thrown by his enemies, hit him in the side but did not kill him.

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[177] Then followed a long series of songs and dances, made up by *Wurarrbuti*, describing how the mechanics from Darwin erected a large steel tank at the nearby settlement. To the chanting of songs and beating of buttocks, the actors "rolled" the tank (actually a small log) along the ground, tilted it on one end, rigged blocks and tackle and lifted the "tank" in place. These dances lasted about a half an hour.

Toward the end of this performance, which finished about mid-day, a woman, *Narlai*, painted entirely in white, and carrying a throwing stick, called upon the dead woman to fight her because, at one time she, *Narlai*, had reprimanded her for running after men. The aborigines applauded her when she had finished her song. Emboldened by this, *Narlai* stood in front of one of the poles and challenged the dead woman to a fight.

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[177] The ceremony finished⁷⁷ with an aeroplane dance, the men posturing in a similar manner to that of the *Jirakati* dance (Pl. 30).

About sunset, the rituals started afresh with the usual honey and mosquito calls.

Pulanimbui and *Muramajua*, acting the part of little children, struggled with each other in the dust of the *milimika* while one of them sang,

[539] "You can't drink from the same breast as I can because we have different mothers."

Old *Malumerinita*, taking up the same refrain, pushed the two "children" aside as he sang,

[539] "I'm a big man, so I'll drink the milk."

(c) *The Payment of the Workers*

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[868] It was after dark before the three "workers", who had cut and painted the burial poles, received their payment (Pl. 37D). As each *pukamuni* man passed the goods, loin cloths, and tobacco to the "worker", he cut his head with a knife, and started a dance in which even a number of little girls took part (Pl. 35A). They had been told by some of the older women what to do, so that the youngsters would be conversant with the woman's place in the rituals.

⁷⁷ This ceremony would have probably, like that of *Wanlampari*, finished at mid-day had not the Superintendent of the settlement insisted on sending the chief woman mourner to a distant locality from which she had been unable to return on time.

Tiwi invoke the power of a yam

By JANE C. GOODALE

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[198] IN 1912 SIR BALDWIN SPENCER, a professor of biology at the University of Melbourne, visited Melville Island, in the Timor Sea. There he observed a Tiwi tribal ceremony in which a number of young boys and girls participated in the ritual preparation of a species of yam the Tiwi called *Kulama*. Spencer wrote of this ceremony, "initiation of young men [and women] on Melville Island is intimately associated with what is known as a yam ceremony." This statement is particularly noteworthy, for, in 1954, when I visited the Tiwi for the first time and witnessed the annual *Kulama* ceremony, no initiates took part. The ceremony, however, was still being performed with no significant changes in the complex ritual procedures that Spencer had described more than forty years before.

That the *Kulama* ceremony can and does take place without initiates does not mean that Spencer was wrong to consider it an important part of initiation into adult life. It does mean that many of the new generation of Tiwi believe that such participation cannot prepare them adequately for a way of life that has been radically changed by contact with Western culture during the past fifty years.

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● 868 In order to understand what this ceremony means to those who still perform it, one must first understand what the Tiwi consider to be adulthood. The Tiwi, now about a thousand in number, have lived for untold centuries on Melville and Bathurst Islands, which are situated thirty miles north of Darwin, the capital city of Australia's Northern Territory. The islands and surrounding waters are well supplied with food, and fresh water is plentiful. Economically and technically the Tiwi have been remarkably conservative. They came to the islands as hunters and gatherers of wild food, using crude chipped stone axes, digging sticks, simple wooden spears, and hunting dogs, and found that little else was needed to exploit the natural resources and to provide themselves with a stable, varied, and adequate diet. With the exception of the wallaby, the land animals of the two islands were small and nocturnal and could simply be collected during the day with little physical effort or skill. The few skills that were necessary were identifying tracks to find game and chopping out or digging up the sleeping animals. Young boys and girls were taught these techniques, since there was no essential sexual division of labor in food-collecting. Boys, however, re-

000 TIWI NATIVE ON Melville Island expresses a grievance in an original song during the annual three-day *Kulama* ceremony.

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SHARK DANCE is among traditional, imitative figures that are performed during ritual preparation of toxic Kulama yams.

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ceived additional instruction in spear-fishing and birding, while girls were taught more intensively to locate and identify edible plants. The children, as a result, were generally independent economically in their early teens, by which time the girls were already married. Young males contributed to their parents' larder and to other households, but did not marry and acquire households until they were more than thirty years old. Even now, this late marriage age obtains in theory, but not always in practice.

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THUS, to the Tiwi, economic independence and/or marriage did not alone signify adulthood. The Tiwi adult was intellectually, rather than physiologically, a mature individual who was expected to join actively in the non-economic affairs of the community. An adult was also expected to be almost entirely responsible for his own health, wealth, and future prospects. This included attaining success in hunting and in war and, for the men, in wife-collecting. If an adult became ill or was injured or, as a Tiwi would say, was unlucky in the pursuit of life's benefits, he alone was responsible for not behaving as an adult should.

The annual Kulama ceremony, held by each community in April at the end of the rainy season, was a most important event to insure individual success. Although a collec-

[P. 11, (C)]

[Text continues on p. 12(c)]

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174 the technique had to be made meaningful to the initiates, the lifesaving qualities of this famine food were explained as health-giving powers. A ceremony accompanied by song and dance was certainly a dramatic and effective means of impressing the initiates in preparation methods. The ritual served another purpose as well: because traveling is so difficult during the rainy season, each household is isolated from the others. The *Kulama* ritual follows this period, and it is natural to expect a reunion to be an occasion to exchange news, settle differences, and tell stories or sing songs that keep traditions alive.

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[177] MUCH harder to account for is the Tiwi idea of adulthood. That every adult is solely responsible for his own health and wealth, and that success in life depends entirely on personal behavior and industry, are ideals strangely similar to those that underlie the American way of life, despite the great gulf between the aboriginal culture and our own. But it is not at all surprising that the Tiwi have a great sympathy for much of Western civilization. Many hold the same views as the *Kulama* singer quoted earlier in this article who saw his children wearing clothes and shoes and going to school to learn to write, for this is the Tiwi's contemporaneous idea of success in a way of life introduced to them only a few short years ago.

[177] Early in the summer of 1962 I revisited the Tiwi for two weeks. Although I knew that the Tiwi desired schooling and training in European ways of life and would seize any such opportunity afforded them, I was hardly prepared for the tremendous changes that had taken place during the eight years that had elapsed since my first visit.

[177] Three months after the *Kulama* ceremony of 1954, a government school was opened. Now all the Tiwi children go to school, and some who have finished the six-year program in the government school have received subsequent training as teaching or nursing assistants. Some others have had "on-the-job" training in various activities connected with a large-scale forestry project that has been started on Melville Island. In fact, all the able-bodied Tiwi men and women are currently employed, and their tasks bear little or no relation to their old life in the bush.

[224] It is perhaps significant—but to me not at all surprising—that I did not hear a single real complaint from the Tiwi regarding their new manner of living. They seem to like it and are anticipating bigger and better things (in the Western sense) for their children. Hunting has become a week-end diversion and the children receive little or no real instruction in that traditional skill.

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884 SOME aspects of Tiwi life are slow to die, however. Most of the old taboos, the observance of which was considered necessary in the past in order to insure health and wealth, are still observed, although at least one teenager expressed doubt that the taboos had any actual effect on the outcome of one's life. Western medicine and public health practices are fast replacing belief in the *Kulama*. During the past eight years only three men have begun the six years of training for *Kulama* initiation, and some of the older men no longer participate in the ceremony. However, as long as even a small number of Tiwi believe in the *Kulama*, the ritual will survive, but I doubt that it will for long.

000 NEAR END of *Kulama* ceremony, performer, although hoarse and tired, must continue to sing until late in the night.
[P. 16, (B)]